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## ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS

### Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was born in Hardin County, Kentucky in 1809. When he was eight, the family moved to Spencer County, Indiana, where he grew up. His mother died when he was ten years old. Since his family was very poor, Lincoln began working at an early age. Although there were some schools in the Indiana territory, he had little formal schooling and was largely self-taught. He worked on a farm until he was twenty-two years old, and then in 1831 moved to Menard County, Illinois, where he worked as a clerk in a store. From 1834 to 1840, Lincoln served in the Illinois legislature, studied to become a lawyer, and moved to Springfield, Illinois, to practice law. He served one term in the U. S. House of Representatives from 1847 to 1849 then returned to his law practice.

In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States. He immediately was faced with the secession of southern states from the Union and the beginning of the Civil War. Although he disapproved of slavery, Lincoln was not an abolitionist (one who believed that slavery should be done away with). He recognized that slave owners had paid for their slaves. Since slaves were considered to be property, it was believed to be unlawful to take someone's property away. Once the southern states had become enemies of the Union, President Lincoln used his war powers as Commander-in-Chief of the Army to abolish slavery in the southern states. In September 1862, Lincoln proclaimed that unless the southern states rejoined the Union by January 1, 1863, their slave property would be considered legally confiscated. Thus, Lincoln acquired the legal right to free the slaves.

Abraham Lincoln was re-elected President in 1864 but was assassinated in 1865.

### Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was born a slave in Tuckahoe, Maryland. Since slaves were seldom told their ages, Douglass estimated that he was born about 1818. His mother, Harriet Bailey, was hired out to a distant farmer shortly after his birth and died when Douglass was about eight years old. Like many slaves, Douglass never knew who his father was.

Frederick Douglass was taught the alphabet by Mrs. Thomas Auld until his master, Mr. Auld, discovered that she was teaching Frederick to read. It was unlawful to teach a slave to read. Frederick realized that reading was an important distinction between slaves and free men. Frederick taught himself to write by copying words in the spaces of his young master's writing book.

In 1838, Douglass bluffed his way onto a train to Delaware, a slave state, then went by boat to Philadelphia and freedom. He moved to Massachusetts and selected the name Douglass to replace his slave name.

Douglass bought his freedom from his old master. In 1847, he started a newspaper in Rochester, New York, advocating the abolition of slavery and supporting women's voting rights.

Douglass encouraged Lincoln to include black troops in the Union Army and used the power of his newspaper to encourage blacks to enlist. The first black regiment was formed in 1863, with Douglass' own sons among the first to enlist. In 1864, Douglass met with Lincoln to secure the same wages, protection, and awards for black soldiers as for white soldiers.

In 1866, Douglass was the only black delegate elected to attend the post-war convention on reconstruction. In 1877, President Hayes appointed Douglass marshal of the District of Columbia. He later served as the U. S. representative to Haiti.

Frederick Douglass died in 1895 of a heart attack.

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